

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 9, 2006

Dr. Mark McClellan
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 309 G
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. McClellan:

Two weeks into the implementation of the new Medicare Part D program, many of the nation's sickest elderly and disabled people were being turned away or overcharged at pharmacies, prompting many states to declare health emergencies and pay for life-saving medications. To date, 27 states and the District of Columbia have announced that they will cover the drug costs of the low-income beneficiaries who would otherwise go without life-saving medications, depend on a family member for coverage, or put the additional costs on their credit cards.

The states that have stepped in to help have incurred several million dollars in unexpected drug bills. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has acknowledged that these states should be reimbursed for their efforts and has implemented a new Medicare demonstration project to allow states that have assisted their dual eligible beneficiaries to be reimbursed for their efforts up until February 15, 2006. While we appreciate CMS's efforts to work with the states, we feel February 15, 2006 is a premature date to stop reimbursement. There are still numerous glitches to be worked out before the deadline, which is less than a week from now.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you extend the date of reimbursement until the Medicare Part D program is fully implemented and functioning. The federal government must not turn their backs on the very states that have picked up the cost of medications and co-payments that the Medicare Part D program promised.

To ensure the Medicare Part D program is going to be successful, we must ensure a functional partnership between states, the private sector and the federal government. We appreciate your attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jim Davis, M.C.



Robert Wexler, M.C.

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Debbie Wasserman Schultz, M.C.

Kendrick B. Meek
Kendrick Meek, M.C.

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Jerrold Nadler
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Bobby L. Rush
Bobby Rush, M.C.

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Frank Pallone, M.C.



Gene Green, M.C.



Betty McCollum, M.C.



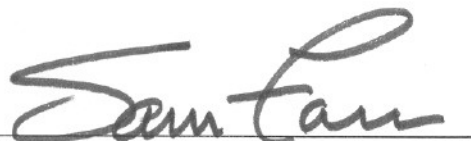
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Martin Sabo, M.C.



Barbara Lee, M.C.



Sam Farr, M.C.



Al Green, M.C.



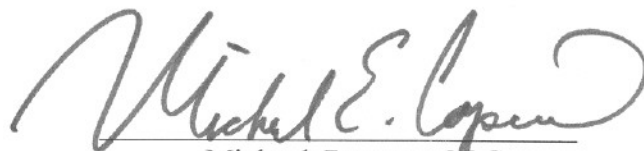
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Corrine Brown, M.C.



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Michael Capuano, M.C.